

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 5, 2006

The Honorable Rob Portman
Director
The Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Portman:

We are writing today in the hope that you will join us in supporting a critical new program designed to address the needs of millions of women, men and children who are victims of sexual assault. As we believe you are aware, the Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) was authorized in the Violence Against Women Act of 2005 (VAWA) and for the first time, provides a direct and dedicated funding stream for rape crisis centers. While we in Congress are still in the midst of finalizing appropriations for fiscal year 2007, I ask that you look ahead to fiscal year 2008 and include SASP in next year's budget.

In reauthorizing VAWA last year, Congress recognized that when VAWA was first passed in 1994 and then reauthorized in 2000, it did not include resources specifically designated for direct services for sexual assault victims. Thus, SASP was designed to address this earlier omission. Not only does this program provide funds for service providers, but it also makes available resources to state, territory and tribal sexual assault coalitions who work to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of local programs. Funding is also directed to culturally specific organizations to better reach and serve victims in communities that have been historically underserved.

While we are well aware that we face a tough fiscal climate, when all is said and done, it comes down to priorities. As long time advocates for sexual assault victims, I know that you agree that serving those most in need must be a national priority. We hope that you will join us in supporting this program by including \$50 million for SASP in the Fiscal Year 2008 budget.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK
Member of Congress



JIM COSTA
Member of Congress

Ruben Hinojosa

Solomon P. Ortiz

Bill Blahut

Earl Blumenau

Corrine Brown

John Enman

Mike McIntyre

Shirley Jackson Lee

Margaret Lindsey

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